

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, March 15, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

ARC, 1701 West Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Bill Pauls, Dennis Knudson, Marin Blevins, Dan Devine, Mike Jones

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Gary Ristow, Tammy Miller

Pauls called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was approved on a motion by Blevins, seconded by Devine.

Minutes: The February minutes were approved on a motion from Devine, seconded by Knudson.

Monthly Report: The February monthly report was approved on a motion from Devine, seconded by Knudson.

Crane Property Update

After four years of negotiations, Hood said the City has agreed to a contract with the Crane family to purchase their family farm. This purchase will allow the development of a regional park in southeast Columbia, which was identified as a need in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Hood showed the Commission maps of the property which adjoins the Philips tract. The Gans Creek watershed is located on the property, as well as a couple of caves, limestone bluffs, natural springs and acres of pastureland. Hood said he anticipates athletic fields being built as well as a possible connector trail to Rock Bridge State Park, which shares a boundary with the land. Access to the property will be excellent with Gans Road and the new interchange that is planned off of Highway 63.

The cost of the land is \$8 million. Council is expected to consider authorization of the purchase at their March 19 meeting. Hood said he was optimistic of a favorable vote.

Pauls asked if any specific proposed use was being discussed for the new park, such as disc golf. A resident had approached him about that issue.

Hood answered that he expected interest from various entities, but the planning would be farther ahead. The City will close on the property in September and will not take possession until the fall of 2008 after the family moves. The park will likely be planned in a similar method as Stephens Lake Park, with public hearings planned. That planning process took about 18 months, which will likely be about the same length of time as the new park. Funds for the park development may be tied to renewal of the parks sales tax, slated for the ballot in 2010.

Devine asked how the purchase would tie up financing of other parks projects?

Hood said though this is a large purchase, other ballot issue projects would not be affected. The City had been anticipating a major land purchase such as this one for some time, however, there is little flexibility for other projects that may come up.

Trail Master Plan--Bear Creek Trail amendment

Hood told Commissioners that an amendment to the Trails Master Plan is being considered, specifically the Bear Creek Trail. The Master Plan shows the trail ending at the Fairgrounds, but with added development in that area, Council has asked staff to look at extending the trail north of that location. Hood shared a map with Commissioners. The proposal would extend Bear Creek Trail following the east branch of the creek to the Smith property north to the Atkins property, then to the northeast corner where the new library is proposed. The trail would then turn back to the creek bottom all the way to Oakland Church Road.

Blevins asked about development there?

Hood answered there are new plats to the east and north of the Atkins property, with possibly 2000 houses being built. Blevins then asked about construction issues the department might face.

Hood said that getting the trail across Highway 63 would be the biggest challenge. The trail would hopefully go underneath the highway, but an overpass may have to be built.

Pauls asked about crossing Oakland Gravel Road.

Hood said that culverts may work.

Devine made a motion to accept the amendment to the Trails Master Plan of extending the Bear Creek Trail to Oakland Church Road, seconded by Blevins.
All in favor, motion passed.

MPRA Conference Report

Pauls commented that the MPRA Conference in Springfield was a great experience. He described the tours he took and praised the facilities in Springfield, including the ice rink and zoo. Pauls added that he heard many compliments regarding the parks system and staff in Columbia as well.

Hood added that the Springfield parks and recreation system has really grown, with 200 permanent employees and 24 new positions planned this year. He said one thing that struck him was the amount of ice damage still left from winter storms. He told Commissioners that it was an outstanding conference.

Griggs said touring the parks facilities offered ideas to Columbia staff. He commented that Springfield now has 9 planners on staff but no in-house construction staff, whereas Columbia does have a construction staff.

Council Items

Hood told Commissioners that the Crane property contract was on the agenda for the March 19 Council meeting. A draft of the CYBA memorandum of understanding is also on the agenda. Hood added that Farmers' Market memorandum would be completed in about a month.

Another item on the Council agenda is a report on the Mavericks' proposal for the new stadium at the American Legion site. Hood said Parks and Recreation staff would have to get new fields on the Atkins tract ready by 2008 and would lose usage of the American Legion fields this fall if the Mavericks' proposal moves forward. He added that a decision regarding the proposal would need to be made quickly if the fields were to be built in time.

Capital Projects Update

Griggs shared updates as follows:

Cosmo-Bethel- dirt work has begun for the new shelter and playground and curb cuts have been made where the community garden used to be.

RC track at Cosmo- electricity has been installed for anticipated races, giving participants the ability to charge their cars.

ARC parking lot- earth work is being completed and sidewalks are being installed.

Garth dog park- fence is being installed.

Antimi- concrete work around the concession stand and bleachers is being completed. New shade structures will be added to the bleachers.

Commission Comments

Jones commented he had heard compliments on the good use of CDBG funds for Douglass Park projects.

Pauls asked about the rocks at the Skate Park and the issue of youth relocating them and making a mess. He asked if it was possible to use really large rocks similar to the ones at Stephens Lake to deter kids from moving them?

Hood said staff could plan toward that goal.

Griggs added that those boulders are usually donated.

Pauls also commented that the Garth Nature Area was looking really good.

Staff Comments

Ristow commented on the community event at Douglass Park over the weekend that was planned as a counter-response to the Neo-Nazi march in downtown. Ristow said the community really came together and made it a nice event.

Devine asked if there were plans to turn it into an annual event?

Ristow said that had been discussions about that, it would depend on the community support.

Hood added that Parks and Recreation staff assisted, but it truly was a collaborative effort that made it a success.

Public Comments

None

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.